

Also Inside this Issue...

Living Healthy	3
Caregiver News	5-6
Energy Efficiency	7
Nutrition News	8-9
Medicare	10
RSVP News	11-14

Mark Your Calendar ...

University Express Spring Classes begin in April— See pg. 14 for more info.

April 16— National Healthcare Decisions Day
www.nhdd.org/public-resources

May is Older Americans Month. “Never Too Old to Play” is this year’s theme!

June 14—Elder Law Day at Hearthstone Manor. Pre-register to 858-8544.

Oct. 24— Public Hearing at Hamburg Sr. Ctr. on Sowles Rd. following noon lunch—More details will be in Fall issue.

Important Numbers for Senior Services:

Assistance, Referral, Caregiving	858-8526
Stay Fit Dining & Fitness	858-7639
RSVP / University Express	858-7548
Insurance Resource Center	858-7883
Going Places Van	858-7433
HEAP hotline	858-7870

60 PLUS



Nominations for 2012 Senior of the Year Accepted Now

Every May, Older Americans Month honors and recognizes seniors for the contributions they make to our families, communities and society. In keeping with the Administration on Aging’s theme for 2012 “Never Too Old to Play” encouraging Older Americans to stay engaged, active and involved in their communities, the Department of Senior Services seeks nominations for **Erie County’s 2012 Senior of the Year Award**, to be presented in May. The Selection Committee is looking for nominations of Erie County residents and the criteria are on page 2 of this issue...

Elder Law Day is Coming June 14

Erie County Senior Services and the Network in Aging of WNY will host an Elder Law Day on **Thursday, June 14th from 8:30 am—1:00 pm** at the Hearthstone Manor, 333 Dick Road in Depew. Call Senior Services at 858-8544 to register for this popular event.

This "sales free" event helps people gather information to make informed choices about plans for their health and financial well-being. Seniors, caregivers or family members attend up to three different seminars on a variety of topics such as wills and trusts; small estate planning; LGBT legal issues; rights as a patient; advance directives; powers of attorney; the role of Medicaid and Medicare in long term care; consumer fraud; and Veteran’s Benefits. As the rules that govern programs are modified, it’s important to be aware of how changes may affect your plans for maintaining your independence. Learning about programs, services, and benefits can help you increase your options and avoid making costly mistakes. Individuals may also have an opportunity to consult briefly with an attorney to discuss personal situations.

The Elder Law Day is free of charge and open to the public. However a suggested donation of \$5.00 will be accepted at the door to help defray costs. Other sponsors include: Legal Services for the Elderly of WNY, Inc.; University at Buffalo Law School; the Bar Assoc. of Erie County; and the Bar Assoc. of New York State. Call 858-8544 to register your attendance.

Page 2 **Senior of Year Criteria**

The 2012 Senior of the Year Selection Committee is looking for nominations of Erie County residents with:

- Demonstrated leadership, innovation, and creativity, achieved after the age of 60
- Involvement in building an active and healthy community
- Significant nature and length of service to the community through volunteer work, not paid employment



All nominations must include:

1. Name, address, and birth date of nominee.
2. Contact information for the person submitting the nomination.
3. A 400 word (or less) narrative explaining accomplishments and why the person should receive the 2012 Senior of the Year award.

Nominations must be **received by April 16, 2012** to: Senior of the Year Award, Erie County Senior Services Advisory Board, 95 Franklin St. – 13th Floor, Buffalo, NY 14202 or submitted electronically to Jennifer.wood@erie.gov. For more information, please call 858-7532.

The Department expects to honor the Senior of the Year as part of our Older Americans Month celebration in conjunction with Stay Fit Dining's special Mothers' Day celebration at lunch on May 10.

Prescription Help!

Senior Citizens may have noticed a change in NY EPIC coverage for 2012. EPIC is no longer available as a day-to-day drug plan. EPIC will only assist you when you need it the most, during the gap in your Medicare Part D coverage plan, commonly known as the "donut hole."

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance organization may be able to help you arrange to get your drugs at a discounted rate. This group brings together pharmaceutical companies, doctors, health care provider's patient advocacy organizations and community groups to help qualified patients lacking prescription coverage get the medicines they need. The **Partnership for Prescription Assistance** offers a simple point of access to more than 475 public and private patient assistance programs, including more than 180 programs offered by pharmaceutical companies. Call 1-888-477-2669 or visit www.pparx.org For further help or information, please call Senior Services' Insurance Resource Center at (716) 858-7883.

It's Important to Have a Working CO Alarm in Your Home!

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the U.S., claiming approximately 400 lives every year. In the State of New York, 200 people are sent to the hospital each year with CO poisoning.

CO is a silent killer – you cannot see it, smell it or taste it. The **ONLY** safe way to detect it is with a carbon monoxide alarm. CO is produced anytime a fuel is burned, with potential sources include gas or oil furnaces, space heaters, wood-burning stoves, water heaters, gas ovens, clothes dryers, car exhaust fumes, barbecue grills, fireplaces, and generators. CO can become fatal in minutes! It is NYS law to have CO detectors installed in your home, and they should be replaced every 5-7 years. Prices range from \$20-50, depending on product features. Check yours when you check your smoke alarms—perhaps when you change the time on your clocks! For more information, visit www.dhses.ny.gov/ofpc/resources/co-toolkit/index.cfm

Do you (or someone you know) live with an ongoing health condition that affects daily life? Four out of five older adults are living with a chronic condition, and half are living with three or more conditions. Living Healthy is a **free** chronic disease self-management program designed to complement and enhance medical treatment and disease management, and help participants gain self-confidence in their ability to control their symptoms and how health problems affect their lives.

Living Healthy program participants include individuals with chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, heart disease, lung disease, or other chronic health problems as well as those who care for someone with a chronic condition.

Participants meet six times for weekly 2 1/2 hour workshops, led by trained leaders, who often have an ongoing health issue themselves. Sessions are highly interactive, focusing on building skills, sharing experiences and support. Each session explores a different topic, such as how to deal with physical symptoms such as fatigue or pain, and with emotional issues like anger, frustration, and depression that can accompany sickness.

Participants learn communication techniques to use with family, friends and healthcare providers; tips for easy and safe exercises; appropriate use of medications; better sleep techniques; and healthy eating guidelines. By the end of the six weeks, participants have the tools to lessen disease-related problems and a long-term action plan to continue managing their health condition effectively.

A 6-week program beginning March 28 - May 9 on Wednesday's from 1:30 - 4 pm at the Cheektowaga Senior Center, 3349 Broadway near Union is currently accepting registration. There is **no cost to attend**, but registration is needed. Call (716) **878-2371 to register** for the free workshop series. **Please** tell the person answering the phone that you heard about the program through the Erie County Department of Senior Services. Space is limited, so call soon.

If you cannot attend the Cheektowaga program, there are several other programs scheduled for different times, locations and dates. If you would like additional information or have any questions about the Living Healthy workshop series, please call Kelly Asher at (716) 858-8081.

"We must always have old memories and young hopes — Houssaye

Are You Able to Re-claim "Lost Money?"

For your protection, banks, insurance companies, utilities, investment companies and many other businesses are required by State law to surrender inactive accounts to the State. These accounts are known as "lost," "abandoned," or "unclaimed" funds, and the Office of the State Comptroller serves as custodian of this money. If you can prove you are entitled to the money, it is gladly returned to you without charge. A quick search using just your name can easily be conducted online at <https://ouf.osc.state.ny.us/ouf/> or write to: Office of the State Comptroller—Office of Unclaimed Funds, 110 State Street, Albany, New York 12236 or call 1-800-221-9311 for more information.

"The trouble with chronic disease is you get sick of it; you get stuck in a rut. The Living Healthy classes bumped me out of that rut and I am doing things that I enjoy again."
- Joseph S. from Buffalo

"The action plan allows you to focus on what you really like to do. It helps you to accomplish tasks step by step."
- Class Participant

Page 4 Federal Benefits Going Electronic in 2013! Safe, Easy, Reliable

Risks Are Associated With Paper Checks: More than 540,000 Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) checks were reported lost or stolen in 2010. An estimated \$93 million in checks issued by the U.S. Department of the Treasury were fraudulently endorsed in 2010.

Ensuring people get their money in the safest, most reliable way possible is one of the reasons the U.S. Department of the Treasury is paying all federal benefits electronically.

Everyone currently receiving federal benefit payments such as from the Social Security Administration, Veterans Affairs, Railroad Retirement Board, Office of Personnel Management or Department of Labor (Black Lung) by paper check must switch to an electronic payment method by March 1, 2013.

There are two electronic payment options recommended by the Treasury Department:

1) **Have a bank or credit union account?** Sign up to get your money by **direct deposit** to a checking or savings account. Your federal benefit payment will go straight into your account on payment day each month.

2) **Prefer a prepaid debit card?** Switch to the **Direct Express®** Debit MasterCard® card. Your money will be posted to the card account on payment day each month. You can make purchases, pay bills, and get cash back with purchases at no charge anywhere Debit MasterCard® is accepted. There are no sign-up fees, overdraft fees or monthly fees. Some fees for optional services may apply. For information on card fees and features, visit www.GoDirect.org. No bank account or credit check needed.

To switch to **direct deposit** or the **Direct Express®** card, contact your federal benefit agency office, visit the Treasury Department's **Go Direct®** campaign website at www.GoDirect.org, or call the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center at (800) 333-1795. For direct deposit to a checking or savings account, you can also make the switch at your local bank or credit union.



Dear Erie County Seniors,

The Senior Services Advisory Board needs your help. The theme for this year's Older American's Month is ***'You're Never Too Old to Play!'*** In its broadest context, "play" is simply the pleasurable use of discretionary time. We are looking for the Erie County senior who best exemplifies this theme; someone who has the wisdom to make **play** out of **work**, someone who has transformed passion into a mission that helps improve the lives of others. See more details in this issue (pg. 2)... but **hurry!** **The deadline is April 16th!**

As always, Advisory Board members welcome your comments, concerns and honest feedback regarding programs and services for Erie County Seniors. Look for us out in the community or contact us by (confidential) mail: c/o Senior Services Advisory Board-Rm.1329, 95 Franklin St., Buffalo, NY 14202.

Best Wishes for Spring,

Ro Hall, Chair—Advisory Board and fellow Advisory Board members:

Tonnalee Batchelor, Buffalo

Providencia Carrion, Buffalo

Bonnie DeGweck, East Aurora

Richard Gehring, Buffalo

Georgia Henley, Vice Chair, Buffalo

Deborah Quinones, Grand Island

William Schulz, Snyder

Leonard Sikora, Williamsville

Ryan Snyder, Hamburg

Donna Sundell, Eden

Richard Szczepanski, West Seneca

Amy Ziegler, Hamburg

The Advisory Board is seeking qualified individuals to apply for membership. To obtain an application or for more information, call 858-7532 or visit www2.erie.gov/transition and look under Volunteer Board Positions.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes

Classes for People Helping Older Relatives or Friends

A six-week educational program designed to provide caregivers the tools needed for taking care of themselves is now being offered. Through six 2 1/2 hour sessions held on a weekly basis, caregivers learn to reduce stress, improve self-confidence, better communicate feelings, and locate helpful resources. Attendees also learn how to increase their ability to make tough decisions and balance their lives. **Pre-Registration is required** - Call 858-2177 or e-mail caregiver@erie.gov for more information about Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes and to register. There is a \$25 cost for the course, which includes *The Caregiver Helpbook**.

Hispanics United of Buffalo** 254 Virginia St., Buffalo 14201 <i>(This class will be conducted in Spanish)</i>	T.B.D.	Coming Soon - Call 856-7110 x 114
ElderWood Village at Rosewood 76 Buffalo St., Hamburg 14075	Tues.	May 15 - June 19, 2012 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm



** Complete course cost is covered for all Independent Health and Blue Cross/Blue Shield of WNY health insurance members.*

*** Course cost is covered in full by CHF Cultural Diversity Grant funding for those that are uninsured.*

Additional classes are being scheduled. For more information or to register, contact:
Erie County Department of Senior Services at 858-2177 or e-mail: caregiver@erie.gov
Class listing is also on our website at: erie.gov/depts/seniorservices

Supported by a grant from the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York and co-sponsored by The University at Buffalo, School of Public Health and Health Professions and the Erie County Caregiver Coalition.

Save the Date:



The Erie County Caregiver Coalition presents their annual
"Caregivers: This Day is for You!" workshop and resource day
on **Saturday, November 3, 2012** at the
Millennium Hotel in Cheektowaga.

Caregivers: This Workshop Is For You!

Transitions of Care

What do you need to know when your loved one's needs change
and they move from one level of care to another?

Can they still stay safely at home?

What is Assisted Living?

When is long term placement the best choice?

Join Nancy Tulumello, LMSW, from the Geriatric Center of WNY and
Jane Nagowski of Park Creek Assisted Living to explore the options.

Saturday, April 21, 2012

OLV Senior Neighborhood, 55 Melroy Ave. Lackawanna 14218

12:15pm — 1pm Complimentary Lunch and view resources

1pm — 3pm Program

Although there is no cost for the workshop or lunch, **reservations are required**. *Supervision for memory impaired adults is available, inquire when making reservation at 858-2177 or email caregiver@erie.gov to RSVP or for information on programs & services for seniors and those who care for them.* This is a project of the Erie County Caregiver Coalition (ECCC). To view ECCC member agency information: www.eriecountycaregiver.com

Upcoming events will be posted on the Caregiver page at:
www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices

Coming Soon:

Memory Café ~ a project of the Erie County Caregiver Coalition. This is a description of a Memory Café excerpted from an article by John McFadden: "Memory Cafés are first and foremost, a setting in which persons with memory loss can share fun and laughter with their care partners and friends in a setting free from awkwardness and stigma. But they are also a setting where accurate information about resources is available and relationships with persons in similar circumstances are formed. They are a vehicle for bringing dementia "out of the closet" and into the heart of community." Stay tuned for our progress on this exciting venture!

Check our web page www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices under the Caregiving tab for these and other upcoming events for caregivers. You may also visit the Erie County Caregiver Coalition website at www.eriecountycaregiver.com for more information on local organizations and agencies that help family caregivers.



These energy efficiency steps are simple ones you can take in your home

Caulk any cracks around windows and doors. \$ Close your fireplace flue when not using it. \$ Insulate your attic, foundation space, and heating ducts to prevent wasting 10-20% of your home's energy use. \$ Lower your thermostat—for every degree you lower it, you could save 3% on your heating bills. \$ Use a programmable thermostat to save about \$200 a year. \$ Close heating vents in unused rooms and close doors to unused rooms. \$ Clean or replace your heating filter once a month. \$ Open your shades and drapes during the day to let in the sun's warmth, and close them at night to keep cold air out. \$ Install CFL light bulbs, which last six times longer and use 75% less electricity than incandescent bulbs. Replacing your 10 most-used bulbs can save \$150 per year. \$ Switch off lights when leaving the room. \$ Set your water heater no higher than 120 degrees. \$ Run your washing machine on cold, and only wash full loads. 90% of the energy that goes into washing clothes is used to heat the water; advances in laundry detergent and modern washing machines get clothes clean without the hot water, saving up \$220 per year. \$ Consider replacing your appliances with ENERGY STAR models—they use up to 30% less energy than traditional models. \$ Unplug small appliances such as coffee makers, toasters, and cell phone chargers, which drain electricity if left plugged in, even if turned off. \$ Turn off electronics such as your TV, computer, and monitors, as these electronics continue to use power even in standby mode. \$ Use smart power strips when unplugging is not practical or convenient. Smart power strips know when to cut power to select electronics, such as your TV, while leaving on the DVR or cable box.

The Senior Services' Weatherization and Energy Conservation Resource Center (WERC) has information about home weatherization, energy conservation, programs for minor home repair, and other cost-savings assistance. Please call Senior Services Information and Referral at 858-8526 for details.

Erie County NY Connects - A Resource for Long Term Care

Erie County NY Connects is a person-centered system of information and resources to make it easier for individuals of all ages to objectively learn about and access long-term services and supports. Erie County NY Connects empowers you to make informed decisions about care options by providing personalized assistance, and helps people to access benefits and programs. Call during normal business hours at **858-8526**, or e-mail at nyconnects@erie.gov, or check out the 24/7 website of helpful information at www2.erie.gov/nyconnects.



Are YOU Missing Out on Available Help?

A report released by the National Council on Aging (NCOA) and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) finds **millions of Americans are missing out on over \$20 billion in free and low cost support that is available to help** pay for health care, prescriptions, food, and utilities. Senior Services maintains up-to-date information on eligibility requirements for all benefit programs available to older adults. If you are having difficulty paying for your daily living expenses and want to know more about benefits for which you might be eligible, **call us at 858-8526** and we'll be happy to assist you.

STAY FIT DINING

"A Great Meal and a Great Deal More"

Overcoming Obstacles to Healthy Eating

Let's face it... There's a reason why so many seniors have trouble eating nutritiously every day. It's not always easy! The following tips will help you "speak the language" of good nutrition and help you feel in control.

Older adults can feel better immediately and stay healthy for the future by choosing healthy foods. A **balanced diet and physical activity** contribute to a higher quality of life and enhanced independence as you age.

Also, seniors are prone to dehydration because our bodies lose some ability to regulate fluid levels and our sense of thirst is dulled. Post a note in your kitchen reminding you to **sip water every hour and with meals** to avoid urinary tract infections, constipation, lack of energy, and possibly confusion.

Stay Fit Dining's registered dietitians take care to offer a variety of foods, while meeting all your nutritional needs. That's why the menu varies from day to day, and why we offer occasional salad choices as well—so there's something for everyone! The new frozen weekend meals also offer a choice of five entrees, so your taste buds need ever get "tired of the same old, same old."

Say "NO" to Eating Alone

Eating with company can be as important as vitamins. Think about it: a social atmosphere stimulates your mind and helps you enjoy meals. When you enjoy mealtimes, you're more likely to eat better. If you live alone, eating with company may take some strategizing, but the effort will pay off.

Upcoming Special Meals and Celebrations at Stay Fit Dining Sites

- 3/20 Welcome Spring
- 4/4 Easter Menu
- 4/9 Dyngus Day
- 4/18 Volunteer Appreciation
- 5/10 Mothers Day Lunch
- 5/25 Memorial Day
- 6/14 Flag Day
- 6/15 Fathers Day Lunch

Make a date to share lunch or dinners with grandchildren, nieces, nephews, friends and neighbors on a rotating basis.

Join in by taking a class at one of our Stay Fit Dining Sites, volunteering, or going on an outing, all of which can lead to new friendships and dining buddies. Our congregate dining sites are a great way to meet others. Call Senior Services' Stay Fit Dining Program at 858-7639 for a location near you.

Senior Nutrition sites provide companionship, and serve our nutritious meals for seniors who are isolated and lonely, and may be unable to prepare their own meals. This is the perfect environment to have a tasty well-balanced meal, and at the same time enjoy the company of friends. Also, we now have our new "**Frozen Weekend Meals**" to allow you a great meal at a great deal every day of the week.

STAY FIT DINING

Page 9

"A Great Meal and a Great Deal More"

5 Myths about Exercise and Older Adults

Myth 1: There's no point to exercising. I'm going to get old anyway.

Fact: Exercise and strength training help you look and feel younger and stay active longer. Regular physical activity lowers your risk for a variety of conditions, including Alzheimer's and dementia, heart disease, diabetes, colon cancer, high blood pressure, and obesity.

Myth 2: Elderly people shouldn't exercise. They should save their strength and rest.

Fact: Research shows that a sedentary lifestyle is unhealthy for the elderly. Inactivity often causes seniors to lose ability to do things on their own and can lead to more hospitalizations, doctor visits, and use of medicines.

Myth 3: Exercise puts me at risk of falling down.

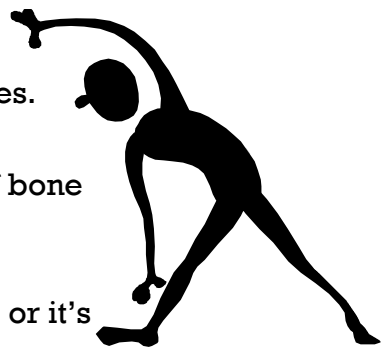
Fact: Regular exercise helps build strength and stamina, prevents loss of bone mass, and improves balance, actually reducing your risk of falling.

Myth 4: It's too late. I'm already too old to start exercising.

Fact: You're never too old to exercise! If you've never exercised before, or it's been a while, start with light walking and other gentle activities.

Myth 5: I'm disabled and can't exercise sitting down.

Fact: Chair-bound people face special challenges but can lift weights, stretch, increase range of motion, improve muscle tone, and promote cardiovascular health.



The Frozen Weekend Meal Program is expanding to a site near you!

How much will it cost? A \$2.75 donation per meal is suggested. However, payments are made confidentially. If you are unable to pay that amount, you pay whatever you can afford. All contributions will go to provide more meals.

What kind of foods are offered? Five delicious, well balanced meal choices will be made available. Frozen meals come with bread or roll, dessert, 1% milk and margarine, and:

CHOICE A: BEEF STUFFED CABBAGE ROLL WITH SAVORY SAUCE, RANCH SEASONED POTATOES AND DICED CARROTS

CHOICE B: LOWER SODIUM POLISH SAUSAGE WITH SAUERKRAUT, SEASONED WHOLE POTATOES AND MIXED VEGETABLE

CHOICE C: (2) BREADED CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS, PARSIED BUTTERED POTATOES AND BROCCOLI, CAULIFLOWER AND CARROT MEDLEY

CHOICE D: CHEESE MANICOTTI AND MEATBALLS WITH TOMATO SAUCE, BROCCOLI & CAULIFLOWER MEDLEY AND DICED CARROTS

CHOICE E: CHEESE OMELET WITH TURKEY SAUSAGE, SEASONED POTATOES AND MIXED VEGETABLES

We ask that you order your meals a week in advance. **Please talk with your Site Manager or call the Erie County Dept. of Senior Services @ 858-7639 for more information.**

Medicare pays for many preventive services to keep you healthy. Preventive services may find health problems early, when treatment works best, and may keep you from getting certain diseases.

Preventive services include exams, shots, lab tests, and screenings. They also include programs for health monitoring, and counseling and education to help you take care of your own health. In addition to existing preventive services, since October 2011 Medicare has introduced **several new preventive services**:

Alcohol Misuse Counseling: One screening per year will cover annual alcohol misuse screening (HCPCS code G0442) consisting of a screening session, and for those that screen positive, up to four brief, face-to-face behavioral counseling sessions (HCPCS code G0443).

Depression Screenings: By your primary care doctor once every 12 months.

Obesity Screening and Counseling: If you have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more, Medicare covers intensive counseling to help you lose weight. This counseling may be covered if you get it in a primary care setting, where it can be coordinated with your comprehensive prevention plan. Talk to your primary care physician or practitioner to find out more.

Intensive Behavioral Therapy for Cardiovascular Disease: Annual, face-to-face intensive behavioral therapy for cardiovascular disease, individual (HCPCS G0446)

Screening for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and High-Intensity Behavioral Counseling (HIBC) to prevent STIs

These are in addition to Medicare's Existing Preventive Services: Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screenings; Bone Mass Measurements; Cardiovascular Screenings; Colon Cancer Screenings (Colorectal); Diabetes Screenings; Diabetes Self-Management Training; EKG Screenings; Glaucoma Tests; Hepatitis B Shots; HIV Screenings; Mammograms; Medical Nutrition Therapy Services; Pap Tests and Pelvic Exams; Welcome to Medicare Physical; Annual Wellness Visit; Pneumococcal Shots; Prostate Cancer Screenings; and Smoking Cessation. • Visit www.medicare.gov/publications to view the booklet, "Your Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services." • Visit www.MyMedicare.gov to get direct access to your preventive health information. • Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). • Call Senior Services' HIICAP at 858-7883 with any questions you may have about your insurance coverage or Medicare benefits.

Protect. Detect. Report. Stop Medicare Fraud!

www.stopmedicarefraud.gov/preventfraud/index.html has more information, but here are helpful hints:

Protect your personal information. **Don't** give sensitive information to someone you don't know. Your Social Security, Medicare, and bank account numbers can be used to defraud you. **Avoid** sending personal information on the phone or over an unsecure Internet connection. **Never** purchase items from a website that you've found from an e-mail link—If you know the name of an organization you wish to do business with, go to the website on your own. **Consider** getting on the Do Not Call list (National: 1-888-382-1222 / New York State: 1-800-697-1220). **Keep** records of health care visits, services, and equipment provided, significant lab work, etc. File copies of any bills or notices from insurance companies, doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, etc., as well as canceled checks. If you **detect** suspicious or erroneous activity on your Medicare Summary Notice or Part D Explanation of Benefits, you should contact your provider or plan.



Getting Things Done.

(716) 858-7548

www.erie.gov/rsvp

Volunteering to Close the Gaps in Literacy

Page 11

In Erie County, 43% of children entering kindergarten do not meet minimum benchmarks for language and literacy skills. By 4th grade, 60% of city schoolchildren read below grade level-- a percentage that only increases as they get older. The City of Buffalo, one of the poorest cities in the US, has one of the lowest graduation rates - only 47.3%, and even lower for minority students. The President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness stated that

“a widening skills gap is a significant risk to future competitiveness and employment.” People with only basic competencies are the most likely to flounder in the rising high-skill, high-wage service economy.

How can you help? Through RSVP, volunteers can get involved in literacy programs that help children, teens, and adults to develop the basic skills needed for the 21st century economy. A teaching background is not necessary.

- At elementary schools, a Head Start program, and at LEAP, an after school literacy program, RSVP volunteers assist children one-on-one or in small groups---by listening to a child read aloud, helping a child to solve a math problem, or working on class projects.
- Through Junior Achievement of WNY, trained volunteers present age-appropriate curriculum on financial literacy topics such as budgeting and saving money at elementary and high schools.
- Literacy Volunteers provide individualized tutoring for adults who read below fifth grade level or need skills in English as a Second Language. Volunteer tutors meet with an assigned student on a weekly basis at a library or other location, or assist students at drop-in centers.
- At Gerard Place, the GED program offers a "second chance" for adults who have dropped out of high school to get their diploma. Volunteers work with students preparing to take the 2-day GED exam covering Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Reading, and Mathematics.
- At Journey's End Refugee Services, new refugees who have been forced to leave their homeland are helped to resettle in Buffalo. Volunteers assist these new refugees with the challenging task of learning English, which is a first step in getting a job, communicating with neighbors, asking for directions, and becoming self-sufficient and integrated in the community. Volunteers also help refugees prepare to take the US citizenship exam, or orient them to their new community.

Volunteers in the classroom can make an astounding and positive change in learning, attitude and behavior, simply by sharing their time and love for learning. By providing one-on-one tutoring to children in the classroom, struggling students receive some extra attention and encouragement - and the volunteers are loving the experience! Students working with volunteers not only have higher test scores and improved grades but also demonstrate a better attitude and a higher level of self confidence, have fewer absences, regularly complete homework assignments and ultimately are more likely to graduate. These aren't just statistics—This is happening every day in the classrooms where RSVP volunteers serve!

Read more in the next couple pages about four of these literacy sites and find out how YOU can volunteer to help someone to learn new skills, gain confidence, and move toward a better life by calling the RSVP office at 858-7548.

The former St. Gerard rectory and school is a vibrant place where struggling families can find safe housing, education, job training and other critical services. The school building is now one- and two-bedroom apartments for single-parent families. The Gerard Place Education Center, offers a range of educational programs, including GED classes. GED students may live in the apartments or in the surrounding Bailey-Delavan neighborhood where over 25% of residents are unemployed and over 30% do not have a high school diploma.

RSVP volunteer Ed White drives once a week the 35+ miles from Springville to tutor at Gerard Place. A retired nurse anesthesiologist, he found that he enjoyed teaching adults when he gave a class for graduate nurses at UB. “I was looking for an opportunity to help on a more “individual” basis – to work directly with a person. I like what Gerard Place is doing here – they really help people.” Ed usually tutors math, especially fractions and percentages. “I like math, and I usually can find a way to explain a problem in a way that the student can relate to. Gerard Place is receptive to different ways of teaching, so tutors can use the method that is most comfortable for them.”

RSVP volunteer Richard Emhof also tutors math. “Students often ask ‘What can I use this for?’ I can help them to see the practical side of math. I worked in production planning for large manufacturing companies such as Occidental and Xerox, where I used math for forecasting sales, managing inventory, and determining how many pieces of equipment we needed. I can give everyday examples.”

Sr. Corinne Yarborough, GED program coordinator, said “Many of our students are bright enough to have completed high school, but something happened that made them stop. Some students decide to return for their GED when they become a parent to improve lives for themselves and their children. It’s not easy.” Sr. Corinne proudly described the dedicated struggle of two GED students (both single parents) to attain their GED diploma. One young man with a 5-year-old child worked as a seasonal employee at UPS from

2am – 9am, and then arrived here at 10am each morning to work on his GED. Another student with a 2-year-old was fighting cancer and receiving chemotherapy. She stopped her chemo for 2 weeks so she would feel well enough to take the test – and passed it! She had been trying to get her GED since she was 19—and said this was the first thing in her life she actually finished.

Southside Elementary:

RSVP volunteers are now serving at Southside Elementary School in South Buffalo, through a partnership with Closing the Gap, a program of Catholic Charities which coordinates health and human service programs in the Buffalo City Schools. This new partnership was launched with two RSVP volunteers – both retired teachers who were eager to return to a classroom and the joys of working with young students. RSVP volunteer Margaret Eggleston serves in a kindergarten class and is thrilled to have found exactly what she had hoped for. “I’ve never had more fun volunteering than I do at Southside! Everyone is so kind to one another, courteous and respectful. It really is nice to go in and see a classroom filled with children who are happy to see you!” The teachers at Southside are also excited about having these experienced volunteers in their classrooms. RSVP volunteer Robert Lewandowski is helping sixth grade students with mathematics. The classroom teacher, Mr. Lysiak said, “Robert works wonderfully with my struggling students, one on one - I wish I could have 5 or 6 more of him!”

RSVP’s newest volunteers at Southside Elementary School include Paul Henjna retired from the Erie County Sheriffs office and Shelia Majchrowski, retired teacher from BUILD Academy in Buffalo.

Journey’s End:

In the heart of Buffalo, 26 people from Somalia, Nepal, Burma, Iraq and Eritrea gather for animated discussion - No, it’s not a meeting of a United

Nations special committee... It is a class of refugees learning English as a Second Language (ESL).

The class is divided into two groups. On one side of the room, two volunteers (a retired teacher and a UB student) explain the different values of US coins and paper bills – along with a mini-US history lesson using faces pictured on bills: Washington, Lincoln, Hamilton, Jackson, Grant, and Franklin. After the students master the difference between a penny and dime, they'll move on to the greater challenges of money --- how to manage it, how to pay bills and other day-to-day considerations. On the other side of the room, ESL Coordinator Tim Hartigan shows a photo of a family gathered for dinner. The group struggles with complexities and nuances of the words Americans use to describe age and family roles. What is the difference between an infant, a baby, and a toddler? When is it correct to call someone a senior citizen?

The rewards of volunteering at Journey's End are many...Not only will you help these new residents learn the language and culture of America, in turn you'll learn about different cultures, and issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers. You'll meet fascinating new members of our community – like Myo Thant, a pro-democracy youth leader in Burma who spent 17 months under house arrest as a key aide to Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi. He fled Burma because he wouldn't compromise his beliefs and faced house arrest, imprisonment—or worse! Now as a program assistant at Journey's End, Thant is helping new refugees to start their new lives in Buffalo.

Many people think they can't volunteer with refugees because they don't know another language or have a teaching background. But classes teach very basic concepts, and hearing English is the most

important thing for these students. A volunteer needs to be patient, good at listening, and flexible. At Journey's End, volunteers work one-on-one or in small groups to help students improve their ability to understand, speak and read English. Classes are held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9am – 12pm and from 1pm – 4pm. You can stay for all or part of a session.

L.E.A.P:

The mission of Literacy Empowerment Action Plan (L.E.A.P) of WNY is to equip children not only with the necessary skills for success in literacy but also to share the joy it brings. Located in the Sheridan Parkside Building of Tonawanda, elementary and middle school children arrive after school to browse the wall of books and check them out. They can sit and read, work on homework assignments, or take part in fun and educational activities planned.

LEAP volunteer Eileen Murphy, a former Language Arts teacher, works with children developing their skills in some very effective and creative ways! Some children practice reading aloud to a trained therapy dog named Lucy. To encourage kids, Eileen told them “dogs have a short attention span so it is important to read fluently.”

LEAP's afterschool program helps first through sixth graders with reading, writing, homework and computer skills in small groups afterschool once a week for eight weeks. Not a professional in the educational field? No problem! Volunteers attend a three-hour training, and a certified teacher supervises and provides direction. But if a structured teaching experience is not something you're looking for, you can still help! Volunteers in the library read with children informally Monday – Friday from 3-5pm. No training is necessary and volunteers can donate as many hours weekly as they choose.



RSVP knows where your skills, abilities, and strengths are needed.
Check our website for a spotlight of current opportunities at
www.erie.gov/rsvp or call us at 858-7548



RSVP's University Express offers stimulating academic classes for older adults who enjoy learning and discussion. Instructors are retired and active faculty and professionals. Open to all Erie County residents age 60+, Spring classes begin in April. **All classes are FREE but pre-registration is required.** Classes are held at Amherst Senior Ctr., Baptist Manor in Buffalo; Canterbury Woods in Williamsville, Cheektowaga Senior Ctr.; Clarence Senior Ctr.; and Orchard Park Senior Ctr. Some of this semester's classes are:

Burma: After almost half a century of political oppression, Burma's new government is promising unexpected reforms - release of political prisoners, ceasefire talks, increased freedom, formation of labor unions, and even allowing democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi to run for Parliament, opening the way for exiles to return. As 'positive' news flows, people inside Burma and exiles are debating: What does 'reform' entail and can it be implemented?

Cybersecurity: Learn about protecting personal information online, identity theft, spam, phishing, and more – no matter what your level of computer expertise! Participants will be provided with a Cybersecurity Action Item list to help them independently take the necessary steps.

Diabetes 101—FREE

Millions of older adults have diabetes or pre-diabetes but don't know it. Signs and symptoms are easy to disregard because they seem harmless / nothing serious. Yet awareness of early symptoms can help get the disease under control sooner and prevent damage. In this **FREE** Class, learn about the types and causes of diabetes, the signs & symptoms, insulin resistance, insulin deficiency, blood sugar, blood glucose levels, and oral medications for control. We'll also discuss screening for diabetes, how often, and Medicare's new screening benefit. **Offered FREE at all University Express sites through a grant from Novo Nordisk, Inc.!**

Voting Rights & Citizenship: Throughout US history, barriers have stood between citizens and their right to vote. Casting a ballot is essential, so why is voter turnout so poor when elections profoundly affect our future? How can we inspire participation in civic life among those least likely to vote? How can redistricting and photo ID requirements impact ballot choices?

Pablo Picasso: Considered one of the greatest artists of the 20th century, Picasso's range of ideas, techniques and materials is matched by few others. Picasso developed Cubism, the first abstract art form, and his art spans various styles from realism to abstraction. Review Picasso's contributions to Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism and Surrealism.

Ancient Egypt: With replicas of ancient artifacts and photos of Egyptian exhibits, take an armchair tour of a civilization that existed thousands of years ago, but exercised technological and medical practices we've "discovered" in the last few centuries. Homes, food, clothing, recreation, and more...

Hinduism: Hinduism is the oldest world religion as well as being the third largest. Learn key beliefs and practices of Hindus on the understanding of self and the divine as expressed in the sacred texts and epics such as the Ramayana, the primary Hindu deities, and concepts of karma and reincarnation.

MORE of this semester's offerings:

- Human Trafficking
- Elbert Hubbard and the Roycrofters
- Shakespeare's Women
- Major Causes of Vision Loss in Older Adults
- Syria & Iran
- Teddy Roosevelt—Conservationist
- United Nations
- Positive Psychology
- The Pan-Am Exposition
- US/Russia Relations During the Reagan Era

For a full class listing, call 858-7548 or visit www.erie.gov/rsvp

As the number of seniors grows, so does the need for our vast array of services. The Department of Senior Services encourages and appreciates donations. If you are in a position to do so, please fill out the form below. 100% of your contribution will be used to provide service to an older adult in need. **Thank you!!!!**

I designate my donation of \$_____ for:

_____ Newsletter

_____ Caregiver Education and Services

_____ Transportation

_____ In-home Services

_____ **Use where most needed**

_____ Home-delivered meals

_____ Adult day services

_____ Health Promotion

Mail to:

Erie County Department of Senior Services

95 Franklin St., Rm. 1329

Buffalo, NY 14202

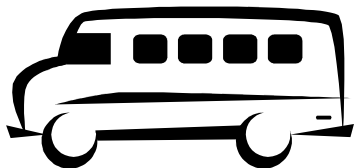
Please make check payable to:

Erie County Department of Senior Services.

Your check is your receipt.

Senior Services' Going Places Transportation - 858-RIDE (7433)

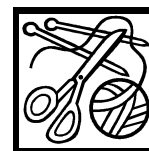
Going Places gives almost 60,000 rides each year! The Appointment Phone line 858-7433 (RIDE) is turned on at 8:30am and is answered until 4:20pm, and the Return Line 858-7019 (also may be used to cancel a ride) is on starting at 8:00am. Rides may be scheduled two weeks to the day for medical appointments and one week to the day for other rides. A suggested (confidential) contribution is \$2 per one-way ride/\$5 for wheelchair.



If Going Places is unable to accommodate you, there is a list of other options that may be able to help - just call 858-8526 or go to www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices/caregiving/transportation.asp

Request for Needed Materials...

Sewing and knitting groups of RSVP need cotton fabrics (including batiste, calico, and flannel), polar fleece, yarn (regular and baby). Call RSVP at 858-7548 to arrange pick-up if you can help out with these much-needed supplies.



Our New Website Coming Soon! - www2.erie.gov/seniorservices

24/7 Find out more details about programs and resources for seniors, families, and caregivers, and is a great way to stay up-to-date between newsletters on matters of interest to Erie County seniors!

Next issue of *60 Plus* is expected late Sept./early Oct. 2012

Go to www2.erie.gov/seniorservices to read the newsletter on-line or to find a vendor location listed by zip code, or call 858-2117.

Our sincere thanks to all those who make this newsletter available.



ERIE COUNTY 60 PLUS
is published by the

Erie County Department
of Senior Services

13th Floor
95 Franklin Street
Buffalo, NY 14202
www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices

Mark Poloncarz
County Executive

Jennifer Mantione
Editor

Funded through grants from
the NYS Office for the Aging

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Buffalo, NY
Permit No. 994

From the County Executive... Get Excited in 2012!



County Executive
Mark Poloncarz

For over 40 years now, Erie County Senior Services has been providing area residents with the support, resources and information they need to make their own decisions, and lead healthier lives. As your County Executive, I'm honored to continue the tradition of empowering local seniors and am looking forward to working with you to make Erie County an even better place to live, with programs geared toward better nutrition, exercise, and overall wellness. It's an exciting time!

There are many ways for seniors to get involved, get active, and get their questions answered all around Erie County. For instance, people looking for something to do might try giving back to the community through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Those caring for a loved one should look into the "Powerful Tools for Caregivers" program to get the support they need. The Stay Fit dining program and other nutrition and fitness programs are working to help seniors educate themselves and make healthy, sustainable lifestyle choices. Information on health insurance, utilities & energy usage, and much more is only a phone call away; as you can see, it's easier than ever for seniors to stay connected and involved in Erie County in a number of ways!

We all know proper nutrition, exercise, socialization and recreation can add years to our lives, and life to our years. We'll continue helping seniors to add those years by working hard to ensure that they have the necessary supports along the way. I'll work with the Department of Senior Services to address the challenges that lie ahead and celebrate the victories, both big and small, that are still to come. Remember, if there is any way that we can be of assistance, don't hesitate to call 716-858-8526, or visit www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices